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The Seed Sower.

A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home

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Weather-Vane.

Weather-vane, weather-vane, shining and bright,
Standing so proudly aloft on your height,
With your wide arms opened out to the air,
This is the message we sing to you there:—

Turn to the North, turn to the South,
Turn to the East or West;
The wind that blows is the wind of God,
He knoweth which wind is best.

Weather-vane, weather-vane, gay in the sun,
Fair is the morn and your work is begun;
But you must stand there in blue skies or gray,
Faithful to duty, foretelling the day.

Weather-vane, weather-vane, pointing so true,
Bearing so bravely your quill in the blue;
Snows they will fall, and rains they will beat,
But after the storm sunshine's ever more sweet.

Weather-vane, weather-vane, we shall grow old,
Years will rob you of your glittering gold;
But aging together we'll vow to the end
No stress of life's weather our metal shall bend.

Turn to the North, turn to the South,
Turn to the East or West;
The wind that blows is the wind of God,
He knoweth which wind is best.

Kate Douglas Wiggin.

He was a great man who first used the word "Universe." He must have been a thinker second to none in intelligence.

For The New Year.

On Beginning Again.

The large, and perhaps increasing, number of people who pride themselves on their impatience of sentiment cannot be expected to feel much concern at the passing of one year into another. Divisions of time are to them merely matters of practical convenience, and New Year prayers and resolves have no special significance. But this, like so much else that calls itself "practical," does not go far beneath the surface; for, as a matter of fact, no history of the moral development of the world would be complete that did not take account of the good resolutions provoked by special times and seasons. If there were no new years and no fresh starts, men would lose a great and recurring stimulus to amendment of life. There are spiritual, as well as political, emergencies when inspiration may be found in a "clean slate," when our one desire and need is to wipe out the past and begin again. This is so evident at the present moment that Mr. Frederic Harrison regards it as a "monomania" to be cured with all speed; which seems to suggest that even a shrewd observer may mistake the remedy for the disease. Pusey was nearer the truth when he said that "new beginnings are the life of perseverance"; and ministers and teachers, without being sensational, may yet realise that at this season their appeals

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are charged with intensified force and solemnity. Milestones do not make the road shorter or longer, but they have a silent eloquence which means much to the traveller. It is not so easy to be good that we can afford to neglect any legitimate incentive, and it is true wisdom to make the first days of the New Year the occasion of a resolute casting away of the paralysis of the past.

Many who read these lines will admit the truth of what has so far been said, but they will, nevertheless, feel difficulty in putting it into practice. They cannot rid themselves of the thought that all this talk of blotting out the past is talk, and nothing more: what is written is written, what is done cannot be undone, and a man's past is a burden he must always carry. They, in fact, raise the question as to whether there can really be any such thing as a new beginning, and whether, as it were, our life's story is not all written on one page, so that there can be no "turning over a new leaf." From one point of view this is true enough, and reflection will show that in a world of morally responsible beings it could scarcely be otherwise. It is part of the tremendous prerogative given to even the least significant that their actions carry momentous and often unalterable consequences. Were there nothing more to be said, much of the heart would be gone from our New Year hopes; but the matter has another and very different aspect. The most casual reader of the Bible cannot miss its insistence on the fact that there is a sense in which a man must forget and banish the past. It never pretends that the past can be recalled or in any ordinary sense forgotten; but it lays its main emphasis on the possibility and the duty of putting away all memories and reflections that hamper and discourage. We have no right to be paralysed by what we have repented of and God has forgiven. "*I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions.*" "*Thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth.*" No literal interpretation can make such words intelligible, but their meaning is revealed to those who know how God forgives, of whom Paul must always be the supreme example. His writings make it clear that he understood how to forget what he could not help remembering: he was constantly haunted by the thought of what had been, and yet he found inspiration and strength in "forgetting those things that are behind." It is a contradiction in terms, but not in experience; and others besides Paul have come to realise that literal remembrance and moral forgetfulness can exist side by side. In this sense those who have honestly repented may make a new beginning with good heart and hope. The paramount truth for them is not that the past is sullied, but that the future is as yet unsullied.

You can remember; you can also hope.

But, even when we are released from the fear of the past, there still remains the fear of the future. In moments of solemnity or enthusiasm we have made so many resolutions which we have afterwards broken, that our self-respect suggests it were better to make no more. There is a worthy side to this reluctance to increase the gulf between our profession and our practice, and it is unhealthy to be continually making resolves that we as continually break. But this does not alter the fact that every good and honest resolve must leave us the better, and our true course is not to abandon the effort but to make it more wisely. Probably, a frequent cause of the futility of New Year resolutions is their vagueness and diffuseness. Determining in a general way to be better, we do not concentrate our attack on any one point, and our experience only shows once more that to attempt everything is to accomplish nothing. Thomas à Kempis suggests a better way: "*If every year we could root out one vice, we should soon become perfect men.*" This has the double advantage of being both definite and practicable, and what is equally important, it is true to life; for it recognises that while men have to fight with sin, it is their *besetting sin* that gives the struggle its keenness. Every man has his weakness, the "one thing" which more than any other constitutes his danger, and if only that could be conquered "the prize of the high calling" would not seem so hopelessly out of reach. To "root out one vice" is, indeed, a stupendous task, even for a whole year; but can we honestly tell ourselves that it is impossible?

A. P.

The Self Conscious.

Luke xvii., 33.

A Sermon by the Rev. Joseph Wood.

You are all familiar with the idea that a great work of pure musical art, such as a symphony, a sonata or a string quartette, however it may be labelled by the composer or described in the programme, speaks with a different voice to different people. Sir Edward Elgar may call his latest overture "In the Sunny South," and to him it brings back memories and pictures of blue skies, deep valleys, hills covered with grey-green olives, quaint old churches and the flashing waves of the Mediterranean in the distance. But to *you* it suggests something quite different, a happy evening with your children by the fireside, and to another a pair of lovers out for a woodland walk, and to a third the glad meeting of friends after long years of parting, and so on through a great gamut of emotions. The more surely such a piece of music bears the marks of genius, the more varied and many-sided will be its meaning.

The same is true of noble poetry. The words are often greater than the poet knew. They are of universal application and flash upon the inward eye of one as having this significance, and upon the eye of another with quite a different light.

So it is with many of the sayings of Jesus; simple in language as they are, they are yet deep as the sea and high as the heavens, and the meaning of them never seems to be exhausted. Of course there are sayings of his which mean one special thing, but there are others so large and profound that we are sure they mean many things, and any special meaning that we find is only one of the multitude of points at which such great words must touch human life.

Such a saying we have in our text. But I do not propose to examine it in its fulness or attempt to show its many-sidedness. I simply wish to take up one of its many suggestions as furnishing a guide to those who are troubled, hindered, and confused, by a too prominent self-consciousness. That may not appear at first sight to have any connection with the text. But let us clear the way.

Like most other things self-consciousness has its good side and its bad. It is the glory of man that he alone on all this earth is conscious of himself, his own existence, and his own personality. The animals, trees, and birds about him all exist, but they do not know that they exist. They have never asked themselves, who and what am I? They have never turned thought, if they think at all, in upon itself, to enquire who is this that thinks? The animal, man, emerging from the clay, and from lower ranges of life only becomes a human being when he first becomes conscious of self. The story of the so-called Fall of Man, is really the story of man's emergence into self-consciousness. To know oneself is a difficult but absolutely necessary task if we would be fully developed men. Without self-consciousness there would be neither poetry nor religion, statesmanship nor fine moral character.

Yet as there is a wrong side of the stuff to even such a sacred thing as love—until it is a lustful passion, and a destructive fire, and a worker of death, so self-consciousness may become morbid and a source of weakness instead of a source of power. It may cause a man to think too much about self, to dwell too much in the inward world, brooding upon his claims, his merits, his mistakes, his own faults, the appearance he offers to others, the impression he makes on the world, until he is maimed and crippled. What many a man wants for effectiveness is to forget himself, to leave the world of self and live more in the lives of others, to cease feeling his own pulse, and looking at his own tongue, and examining his own soul, and wondering what people say about him, and to throw himself bravely into his work, setting his mind on *that* rather than on the figure he cuts, or the impression he makes on others.

Look at this in the region of bodily health. We all know that the really healthy man is he who never thinks about his health. And we all know that the people who are always conscious of themselves and their ailments, afraid of catching this or doing that, who weigh their food to the ounce, who daily take their own temperature, who are on the watch for symptoms, who think a great deal about their diet, who read the *Lancet* and get a new

alarm about their food every week, are just the people who never find what they are most anxious about—good health! Certainly, the best use of the body is not obtained by this anxious care for the body. Often and often anxious care for the body degenerates into selfishness, invalidism, and incapacity. There are people so careful of their physical force, so afraid of exposing it, so afraid of catching cold or getting tired, that they never in all their lives use their physical force for one brave outburst of action. If you could make such people just forget their health entirely, and eagerly plunge into some of the multitudinous work waiting to be done, you are sure not merely that more work would be accomplished, but that their health would be stronger than it is now. He who bravely runs the risk of catching disease in helping others is far less likely to catch it than he who shuts himself in behind locked doors to keep out the germs. He that seeketh his health—he that is always conscious of himself in the matter of health—shall lose it; but he that forgets himself shall find it.

It is the same in the matter of Happiness. They who are always thinking about their own happiness and pleasure, watching for it here and hunting for it there, laying traps to catch it and devising plans to secure it, are just the people who never find it. It is they who suffer from ennui and weariness; it is they who complain and are disappointed, and who join the crawling woe-begone but extremely well-dressed ranks of the Pessimists The happiness that comes by the way when we are never thinking about it, but when we are intent on our work and duty is far sweeter, far more lasting, than the happiness we go out to seek. The man who in life is for ever asking himself, "Am I as happy as I ought to be? Am I treated fairly in the matter of happiness? Ought I not to have the pleasures which I see others have?" that man will never enter into the kingdom of happiness. It is the man who forgets all about himself and his own happiness in ministering to the happiness of others who is the really happy man. The happiness we seek of set purpose is apt to elude us. It is the happiness *which seeks us* as we are about our work that is real, and has staying power.

We are indeed to "rejoice in every good thing that the Lord God sendeth us," and it often happens that we fail in receptiveness toward the joys that meet us on the path of life, and neglect the cup of refreshing that is offered us—blind to gifts of happiness which wait to be appropriated. But mark the important distinction between the happiness we go out to seek and the happiness that seeks us; between that greed of happiness which is ever devising plans to ensnare it, whose main object is to escape the care and trouble and burden of life, that it may secure personal pleasure and comfort, and that noble happiness which surprises us by the way, when happiness was the last thing we were thinking about. The joy that is pursued after turns out to be a poor thing. It is the joy that overtakes that satisfies. The joy for which the house is built and swept and garnished, often fails to receive the expected tenant. It is the joy that steals into our poor house as we sit at work there, thinking of no such visitors, that does not fail of blessing.

He that is self-conscious about his happiness will lose it; he that forgets all about his own happiness in trying to make the world happy shall find it.

So it is—and this is the point I want to make—with regard to our powers, our influence, our impression, and all that is necessary for a man to get the best advantage of himself. So many men are hindered by the continual consciousness of self. If they could only forget self they would be and do ten times better. We all know how painful and how limiting is self-consciousness in the little child. It is the frank, open child, who never thinks of self, who throws herself into what is going on with abandon, who delights us and of whom we think with pleasure. The self-conscious child is apt to become the adult prig. You want to distil that nonsense out of her—to persuade her to forget all about herself. Half the shyness, half the gaucherie, and half the bad manners in the world are due to diseased self-consciousness. People cannot forget themselves. But the worst result

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of this debased self-consciousness is that it hinders people from doing and being their best. How many a man cripples himself by the question, "Am I doing myself credit in this work of service?" Oh, my friend, it is the work and not the credit it does you, which is the supreme thing. Sure I am that those deeds which have most blessed at once the world and the doer, have been those that were done under such a supreme compulsion of the deeds themselves as left no room for any self-questioning of the men who did them.

Paul, Luther, Cromwell, Gladstone, and Darwin did not ask whether what they were doing was likely to bring them credit; they never asked what men thought about them, they never plagued themselves nor weakened their powers by wondering what the world said about them—they lost themselves in their work. It was the righteousness of the thing itself, the glory and compulsion of its righteousness that made them do it.

But when a man once begins to think of the figure he cuts in doing this or that, or to wonder or greatly care what people say about him; when he cultivates sensitiveness to opinion to such an extent that he becomes morbid, and shivers at every quick word, and cannnot bear to be laughed at or criticised, and is ready to "die of a rose in aromatic pain," then his consciousness of self becomes a positive disease, and his sensitiveness degenerates into effeminacy or cowardice. It is indeed no virtue to be thick-skinned, but we may be so thin-skinned that at last we are afraid to undertake any duty or to make any venture, lest we should be hurt by some pin-prick of unkindly remark. There is a fine old Scotch saying, rough as the Scotch thistle, but having a glorious purple blossom, which we do well sometimes to repeat. "They say! What say they? Let them say." Truth to tell, this diseased self-consciousness is a proof that we have lost real self-respect. He who courts and craves the approbation of others—who wants it to uphold him—who cannot be happy without it—that man in magnifying self has lost the best part of himself. We may value approbation when it comes, and be cheered and encouraged by it without losing self-respect; but to be dependent on it, to be anxious about it, to be sensitive when it is not given, to make it a motive, is a degradation. If it comes to us, let us with the assent and consent of conscience, readily accept and freely enjoy it, but do not let us go in quest of it.

We fail to realise how much the effectiveness of our life is limited and curtailed by our self-consciousness, that is by considering the effects of our acts upon *ourselves*, as well as the accomplishment of their own purposes. If we could just lose ourselves in our endeavour, and forget ourselves in our work, it would be done more easily and with better result. With one thing and only one thing to think of—"How can I do this work as well as it is possible for me to do it?" not asking anything about our being happy in doing it—or about what people will think of us in doing it—how surely we should hit the mark. How much more telling then our work would be on other people. I commend to you this lofty self-forgetfulness.

There are sayings of the Master's which are full of unattainable yet ever-approachable ideals—such sayings as "Blessed are the pure in heart," "Be ye perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect," "Lay up treasures in Heaven," "Love your enemies," "Forgive until seventy times seven," "Ye must be born again," and many others. They are words that fall on man's spirit with supernatural force. They are not precise definite rules—they are illimitable ideals—always bringing us on from good to better. This is the unique glory of the Gospel. Of these great sayings, not one is more profound than the Master's words about losing one's life to find it, which surely means among other great things, losing all thought of self in thought for others, in sympathy with men and women, and with noble causes, in the steady motion of our being to mingle itself with the thoughts, the doings, the faiths and hopes of mankind. It is a great ideal. We are to be saviours of men, lovers of men, inspirers of men, in forgetfulness of self. He that saveth his life in self-interest shall lose it. The whole of noble life is there. "What about your own soul, Mr. Clarkson?" said a lady to the great philanthropist, observing how ceaseless were his labours in the great cause of human freedom. "Madam! I have been so

busy for others that I had forgotten I had a soul!" But who will say that Clarkson had not saved his soul in saving others? The mocking reproach hurled at the Crucified, "He saved others, himself he cannot save," was the highest possible tribute to his self-sacrificing love. Saving himself was the last thing in his thoughts. It is a principle which everywhere flowers into lovely life—always great, even in its lowest form of self-for getting work. Indeed what is *not* contained in it of that which is most beautiful; all sweet stories of motherhood; all courage and fortitude in ill fortune; all joy in friendship; all the labour of fathers for children; all patriotism; all seeking and saving of the lost. In that wonderful saying is contained half the great poetry and all the redeming deeds of the world. The Cross of Calvary is there and the whole spirit of sacrifice, and all which from time to time brings us to the table of Communion in remembrance of one who counted not his life dear unto him that he might bear witness to the love of the Father.

Bills in the Family Session.

THERE is a time to rejoice and a time to weep. There is also a time to spend, and—as many of us are unpleasantly reminded at this season of the year—a time to pay. The month of January may be described as the great English Ramadan, or season of fasting and humiliation for the extravagances of the previous year. Inattentive to the excellent proverb which requires us to be "just before we are generous," we keep Boxing-day before Settling-day, and give away our half-crowns or shillings in a more or less liberal manner, regardless of the fact that a few days later we shall have to pay away inevitably more pounds than we have calculated upon. For—we ask with the solemnity befitting the subject—did anybody ever find their Christmas bills amount only to the sum which they had roughly estimated, or to any minor amount? Has the phenomenon ever been witnessed of the master of a household cheerily addressing his wife across the breakfast-table, about the second week in January, "Well, my dear, I've cleared off everything for this year, and it comes to much less than I expected; and now we have fifty pounds in hand to buy that carpet we have been talking of so long"? We confess we have never yet heard any conversation bearing the remotest relation to this sort of announcement, and that peremptory orders or pitiful entreaties for further economy and closer retrenchments seem to be more commonly the order of this lugubrious day. In the first place, there are always some mysterious debts turning up at this season which everybody had forgotten were ever incurred, or regarding which the incurring party felt a profound conviction that they had been long ago paid, only, unfortunately, documentary evidence, or any evidence at all, of such payment, is unluckily missing. Then, again, bills which have been understood to amount to "about two pounds," have an inexplicable proclivity to gravitate into bills of £2 19s. 11¾d.; and thus it comes to pass that the £5 note, which it was confidently supposed would settle two or three such accounts, fails to do anything of the kind, and a second note melts in the process, in the way in which five pounds do always so miserably disappear when once their pristine unity of cheque or note is dissolved into cash.

As one bill after another comes in, the pecuniary events of the previous year seem to be rehearsed, as by some stern Recording Angel. Carelessness in giving an order in one case, fear of domestic grumbles in another, self-indulgence in a third, momentary indulgence compelling recourse to costly credit in a fourth, and so on, till the debtor is enabled to form a very fair judgment, if so disposed, of the extent of his own folly, and of that of the dear relations—dear in all senses—whose expenses it is his privilege to defray. Of course some recriminations under such circumstances are inevitable, and to the junior branches of a family the face of Paterfamilias, as he peruses his morning letters, is apt to be somewhat of the nature of the consultation of a barometer when the mercury sinks to "Stormy." If there happen to be establishments, sartorial, culinary, or even medical, where an open credit is kept for the family at large, or if no allowance be made to boys and girls, and they are permitted to run up bills of any kind, at home or at school,

of course the gravity of the situation is the more considerable, and a father in a rage, a mother in tears, and two or three brothers and sisters in deep disgrace, may be counted on as the not wholly abnormal Signs of the Times at the conclusion of the holidays. The worst of such troubles is, that instead of parental generosity drawing the hearts of the children to the fathers and inspiring them with a share in their parents' anxieties, such quarrels are apt to harden the young, and make them still more cruelly indifferent than before to cares which they do not comprehend. "The governor is so stingy," has doubtless been the comment of a thousand foolish lads this week back, on adjurations to economy which have come from overworked fathers, driven almost to despair by their desire to give their children advantages beyond their resources to command, or which could only be commanded by the strictest frugality.

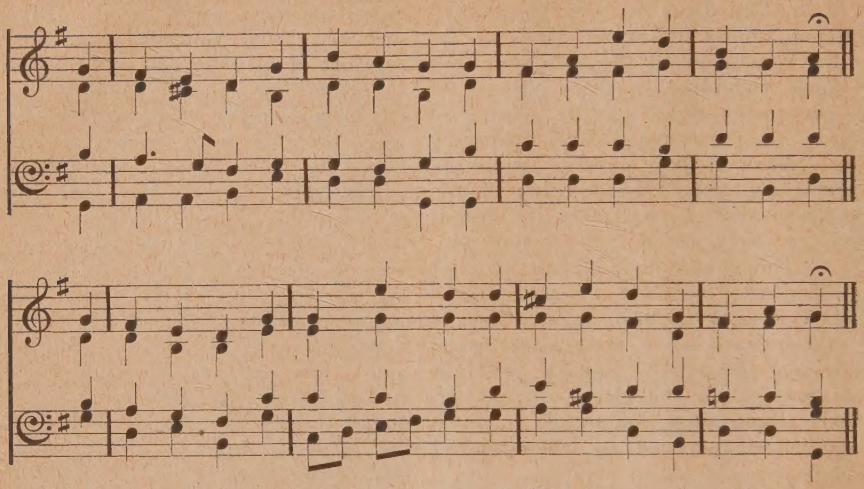
The truth is, of course, that where there is no responsibility there can be no sense of the seriousness of such transactions; and that so long as parents keep their boys and girls without private allowances, however small, and without any comprehension of the relation between the family income and expenditure, there will always be the same story of youthful heedlessness and paternal mortification. To enlist the sympathy of the child in the interests which are alike his own and his father's, it is absolutely needful that he should first have the training afforded by some small independent allowance—if possible, sufficient to cover the expense of his clothes—and then that he should be, in some measure, taken into counsel and allowed to understand a little the rationale of the family policy. Often we see the good result when some poor little elder sister, a mere child in years, but an old woman in steadiness and self-denial, has been initiated, perhaps by a widowed mother, into the mysteries of "limited means." How wise, how industrious, how clever, and withal how happy, the little creature becomes, saving every penny that can be saved, taking half the burden of her younger brothers and sisters off her mother's shoulders, and growing up that mother's trusted friend—daughter and sister in one! And, again, how some young boys, early made to feel that they must "do something" for the family, begin from school to be self-denying, persevering, nobly ambitious, and are, from youth to age, the glory and comfort of all who are connected with them! In either case, it only means that the child has been somehow made to feel, not only such love for his parents as a small puppy gives to the person who feeds it and plays with it, but the real human wish to share his cares and hopes. Such sympathy between child and parent is precisely what is commonly lacking in our households. We are, happily, rarely driven, like Lear, to complain of the "serpent's tooth" agony of a thankless or wicked child. But, on the other hand, the sort of thorough mutual understanding and felt identity of interests which ought to subsist between father and sons is not often to be seen. Children naturally take everything which is given them as a matter of course; they are all of them born "heirs of the earth and skies," and no present, however vast, would surprise them or burden their light young hearts with any painful weight of gratitude. This is all as Nature has intended. But when infancy develops into youth, there is as much reason why boys and girls should be taken into the confidence of their parents, as there is that good parents should seek eagerly to enter into theirs; and that their nearest friends and intimates should be those who love them most disinterestedly. Just as an unspoiled child infinitely prefers to share a bit of real work—carpentering, cutting, pasting, haymaking—to playing with an unmeaning toy, be it ever so gaudy and expensive, so every boy or girl is truly happier and feels far more honoured by being taken into confidence and made to share the family interests, than by being always petted and amused, and cloyed with indulgence.

FRANCES POWER COBBE.

We should gain unspeakably if we would learn to see some of the poetry and pathos, the tragedy and comedy, lying in the experience of a human soul that looks out with dull grey eyes, and that speaks in a voice of quite ordinary tones.

Chadwick's New Year Hymn.

S. K.



O Thou whose perfect goodness crowns
With peace and joy this sacred day,
Our hearts are glad for all the years
Thy love has kept us in Thy way.

For common tasks of help and cheer,
For quiet hours of thought and prayer,
For moments when we seem to feel
The breath of a diviner air,

For mutual love and trust that keep
Unchanged through all the changing time,
For friends within the veil who thrill
Our spirits with a hope sublime:

For this, and more than words can say,
We praise and bless Thy holy name;
Come life or death, enough to know
That Thou art evermore the same.

Sonnets.

I.

Above the dark copse risen, O silent moon,
Slowly in silence grows thy sad face bright,
While yet the pale day lingers. Rustling night
Steals gradual o'er the waiting fields; and soon,
Sole with the placid stars and darkness boon,
Thou with mild beams wilt shine on dreaming height,
And meadows that in sleep forget the light
And the hot glory of unremembered noon.

So shine within my soul, pure orb of faith,
Now the loud day of certitudes is done;
Amid the ruining crash of ancient form,
Tumult, and swift alarms, and sudden storm,
Shine, till the beams of God's unrisen sun
Flush the far peaks beyond the shades of death.

II.

Down from their secular thrones the gods are hurled:
Monotonous rains upon the wide roofs plash
Of temples swept and void; drearily dash
On senseless shores loud billows idly curled;
The West stares dumb through flaming clouds unfurled;
Past the blind stars the trailing meteors flash
Unmeaning and unmarked, amid the clash
Of rolling atoms in a vacant world.

A vacant world—but no! The yearning breast
Feels in the vast a Spirit that moves unknown,
And o'er the unmeted spaces throws a spell
Of pregnant magic. Hark! what voice is blown
Upon the wind? Deep secrets keeps the West,
And the mute stars have thoughts they cannot tell.

Charles Camp Tarelli.

The Poetry of Life.

Is it possible that no really great poetry is now being written because we are not living a really great life as a people? Such critics of society as Ruskin and Morris would answer this question in the affirmative. It is possible their conclusions are not justified, for it may be their criticisms do not take into consideration all of the facts necessary to a sound judgment. All the ages of the past have not been productive of poetry, as all ages are not those of faith. There are times of silent germination of new ideas and social forces, that produce no great literature only because life is too full of intense expression to find utterance in the self-consciousness of poetry.

Yet we suspect this is not a just answer to the question we have asked. An individual may be so absorbed in one form of thought or activity as to exclude all others. This not because the special interest is exclusive of poetry, but because the mind is not large enough to give opportunity to a full expression of several large interests at one and the same time. This is true of a people as of an individual, and for the same reason. If a nation devotes itself loyally to science, it will follow that religion will not find for itself the fullest measure of expression. We know very well that the ages of faith have not been those when science or any form of positive knowledge has had just recognition.

Some measure of beauty and the joy of life are always essential to sanity and right living. It is possible to become so exclusively devoted to material success that life will be cramped, narrow, and bigoted. No interest is ever all-sufficient or worthy to exclude other and equally vital, social, and individual forces. The ages of faith are mean, fanatical, and unprogressive because they exclude science, social justice, and a morality that is rational. The danger is as great that an age of inventive genius, material prosperity, and commercial domination, will become an age without high ideals, the poetry of life, and a keen sense of ethical values. With astonishing ease the mind accepts that with which it is familiar. This is why material ugliness seems beauty to those who have been accustomed to it from youth. In this way we justify what is inherently false, ugly, and untrue.

Here is the mission of the protestant and the critic. They keep alive in us those qualities that would otherwise be neglected and lose their effective power. Those who are protesting against our social system, in the name of a larger brotherhood and a greater measure of justice in the distribution of the goods of life, are doing us a noble service. They seem to be mere fanatics; but they represent a great and essential truth, and one that society must accept for its own good. In the same way those who protest against the ugliness of our commercial age are worthy of faithful recognition. They represent a truth of the first importance. If that truth is neglected, life will grow corrupt, and its purposes unworthy.

We need more of the poetry of life. We need more of beauty, idealism, and faith. It is not to be supposed that these will die out, for they are all permanent factors of human nature. But it is possible that they may be neglected, as they undoubtedly are at the present time. Our life suffers because of this neglect. Our material success does not compensate for the dearth of beauty and idealism. Wealth increases, but faith stagnates. We grow contented with a narrow and ugly life because material prosperity has come upon us. Morality is less vigorous and insistent because outward success is great.

The only remedy is a larger and deeper recognition of the poetry of life. Life is worth more than any of its accessories. The poetry of living is identical with life itself, while the material things are but incidents. The kind of house we live in is insignificant in comparison with the healthfulness, sanity, beauty, and joy of the life it shelters. Luxury is not vital to robustness, but its enemy. Wealth does not add to beauty, but is ever liable to qualify and to degrade it. Material prosperity does not create the poetry of life, but kills it.

The poetry of life is life itself in its vigour, joy, clearness of vision, and sanity of purpose. It is fulness of life, beauty of aim, largeness of intent, and clearness of ethical purpose. It is one with justice, equality, and

brotherhood. While some suffer and live in a degraded manner, it cannot exist in its fulness. It goes with recognition of the rights of others. It is in harmony with peace and good will, which are constituent elements of its being.

While the poetry of life cannot be secured by wishing for it, when it is not desired, it will not come. Faith in it is essential to its presence. Those who desire it must turn sternly away from much else that men covet. It may be found where poverty is, but that is not the way to it. Outward beauty does not give it, as happiness is not essential. It is sympathy with nature, inward harmony, integrity of ethical purpose, loyalty to the ideal perfection the noblest souls have believed in and sought to make their own. In a word, the poetry of life is the joy of living and the worth of all that life can give.

The Sunset Limited.

Oh, Hush-a-bye Land is a beautiful place
For sleepy small people to go,
And the Rock-a-bye Route is the favorite one
With a certain wee laddie I know.

The track lies on sleepers of feathers and down
No accidents ever take place,
Though there's only one track, and there's only one train,
But it runs at a wonderful pace.

There are beautiful things to be seen on this route,
If you're good you may take just a peep;
But strange as it seems, they are seen best in dreams,
Be sure that you soon go to sleep.

Say good-night to the Sun, for he's off to bed, too—
He can't hear you, so just wave your hand;
The Moon and the Stars they will light up the cars
As you travel to Hush-a-bye Land.

So, quick, jump aboard, it is time to be off,
You have nothing to pay, you young elf,
Just think of the luxury, laddie, you'll have—
A whole sleeping-car to yourself!

—*American.*

The selfish cannot be convinced that others are not so too. That is the worst evil of selfishness—its belief in the possibility of unselfishness.

Notes and Jottings.

In the November issue attention was called to some remarkable pronouncements by eminent Congregationalist divines on the doctrines of the Deity of Christ and the Virgin Birth. These went to show that the New Theology bears an extraordinary family likeness to what some of us know as Unitarianism. The resemblance has been much resented, and a suggestion is being seriously offered in orthodox quarters that a pink ribbon,—or shall we plainly say, red tape?—ought to be tied round the neck of one of the twins to prevent confusion. We may be safe in leaving the matter to be fought out between Mr. Page Hobbs and those mysterious individuals whom he calls the Annerley men.

Theological progress, which in former ages could only be marked by the lapse of centuries, must now be registered in days. We shall really begin to sympathise with orthodoxy, for it is now the sect everywhere spoken against. It has hardly recovered from one shock of Mr. Campbell before it is gasping under another. Perhaps the boldest thing ever spoken from an English pulpit, still professedly orthodox, was his sermon on "Divine Authority," reported in the *Christian Commonwealth*, of November 29th.

A few extracts will prove interesting. "There has risen to-day from every part of the intellectual horizon, a new vision, a wider view of the meaning of the Christian revelation. Men of science and men of letters, as well as preachers of the Gospel, are the prophets of the new era. You may recognise it in the breaking away from out-worn intellectual forms of religious belief, called the venerable creeds. Ecclesiasticism is crumbling before that new divine word in every civilised country on the face of the globe."

He then proceeds to outline this new vision. "It is the essential divinity of man; his unbroken oneness with God; the salvability of the race as a whole, and not merely of the individual here and there; the unity of all life, the hither and the yonder, this side and the further side of the change called death.

. . . the home-gathering of mankind to that Eternal Heart whence it came, a process in which every saviour of the race shall willingly labour and suffer, until all selfishness has been destroyed, and every sinner has become a Christ."

Significant as this is, coming from an "orthodox" pulpit, the most astonishing thing in the whole sermon was the fierce exposure of those whom the preacher called "the host of cowards and time—servers within the churches themselves." Mr. Campbell is not in any sense a sensationalist, but an essentially fair-minded and temperate man. He was careful to say he was speaking of individuals, not of whole classes of men. Of ministers, he said, "There are some of them who dissemble, or worse, with the truth that God has committed to their charge. They have the fear of men before their eyes: they would rather please the unthinking mob, or those who provide them with their daily bread, rather swim with the stream than speak as the prophet of truth."

Ministers are, after all, but human beings, and in a great measure what the laity will permit them to be, and therefore not much more or less heroic than any other great professional order of men. The preacher left the laity no cause for self-complacency. "What I say of the ministry applies to the so-called orthodox custodians of Christian Truth all the churches through. There seems to be something in the average religious character tending to disingenuosness; a high standard of religious profession seems to be compatible with a comparatively low standard of loyalty to truth. Religious people are often found to employ the weapons of slander, misrepresentation and petty persecution in order to destroy, if they can, an unpopular doctrine."

Then came the thunderbolt. I have been looking since at the faces of some orthodox acquaintances expecting to see the marks of its branding. "Therefore with all solemnity and deliberation I say *these men are liars.* Like their predecessors of old, liars, not so much by what they say, as by what they do not say. Liars, by trying to ignore, or misrepresent, or distort the truth, preaching as though they do not believe it when they do. Liars, because they will not look facts in the face; liars using the name of God."

And it was only a few months ago that I heard an eminently orthodox man speak of Mr. Campbell as St. John.

Armstrong once wrote on this theme, and said something at once grave, guarded, and even gentle. But the *Christian World* seemed to resent the soft impeachment, and printed an article entitled: "Is orthodoxy dishonest?" to which Armstrong replied in a conciliatory, but as one would expect, uncompromising tone. We have moved since them. Now it is the *Christian World* itself that joins in the attack. In its issue of December 13th appeared a quite astonishing review of Dr. Hasting's fresh enterprise: "A Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels." The reviewer takes the publication severely to task. "We have said there is caution in it. But the caution becomes too often timidity and a shirking of the issues. It is this unwillingness in ecclesiastical England, taken in bulk, to face the facts that makes our theology of no account on the Continent. . . . Of this burking the issues, this wandering in the region of conventional unrealities the Dictionary offers us too many examples."

This seems pretty outspoken, and might well cause the Editor to pray that he might be delivered from his friends. But the reviewer does not stop here; he goes on to indicate what some of those conventional unrealities are, and gives a keen and cutting edge to his remarks. Indeed, we feel that one of the twins—without even a pink ribbon to cover his shameful nakedness—is appearing again. "Why is it?" asks this reviewer; "that the English-speaking mind, so leading a mind in other directions, should on these questions be content not to lead, but instead, to be dragged along? It is this same slavery to convention, of subservience to the formularies of the past, which leads the writers on such subjects as the

Divinity, Incarnation, and Authority of Christ to persist in placing Him outside the circle of humanity."

He then quotes one of the articles as saying, "If Jesus is no more than man, the Gospel narrative is for ever unintelligible." This is more than the reviewer can let pass unchallenged, and he writes, "Why so? Which is better, to limit humanity by placing Jesus outside it, or to broaden and heighten humanity in all its ranges of possibility so as to include Christ in it? To put Him outside is to render Him unintelligible and unreal, His actions devoid of significance for us as the exploits of Jupiter or Saturn. To put Him inside; to make Him, with all His glorious God-consciousness, His supremacy of power and character, one of us, is immediately to raise the possibilities of the race to the level of a practical infinitude."

After which we may ask ourselves that dignified and imperishable interrogation,—Are we downhearted?

J. M. Lloyd Thomas.

The Leaf and the Life.

Who gathers up the fallen leaves
The tree of truth hath borne and shed,
To twine tradition's wreath, receives
No living truth,—the leaf is dead!

Who views the fallen leaf with woe,
As sign of truth's decadence, gives
No thought unto the fact that, though
The leaf is dead, the truth still lives!

Open our eyes, merciful Father, that we may see the wide difference there is between what we are and what we ought to be. Startle us out of our spiritual slumbers. Take us, heavenly Father, and mould us to thy will. Give us strength to overcome every unholy passion. We commend ourselves to thine unalterable love this night. Whether we live or die, we are thine, and we are under thy providence evermore. Amen.—*William H. Furness.*

The Baptism of Jesus.

A S. School Lesson.

I.—Mark with the Gospels in Hand the Growth of the Tradition as to the Baptism.

It is important to get at these things first hand. See how the supernatural element increases in Matthew and Luke as compared with Mark, the earliest account. The Fourth Gospel, apparently, regards it as impossible that Jesus could have condescended to be baptised by John, and gives us a different interpretation of the connection of Jesus and John.

In the later apocryphal Gospels the whole atmosphere is still more full of the miraculous elements which the later tradition as to the Messiah loved. In the second Gospel of the Infancy, God publicly owns Jesus as his son. One of the early Fathers makes the voice use the exact words of psalm ii., 7. In the Gospel of the Nazarenes and in the Gospel of the Hebrews the Jordan is on fire, and a still more lengthy statement is made by the voice to the multitude. Part of it runs, "Thou art my first-born son, that reignest forevermore." The ideas of the early Christians shape the record.

II.—Try to understand how Jesus was led to come forward and be baptised.

1. *The preparation.* Jesus was now about thirty years old. He had lived under the influences which we have been tracing. The oppression of the people had moved him. What thoughts the rebellion of Judas, the Galilean, must have caused! Probably already, under the influence of the prophets, he has been asking how the hopes of Israel are to be fulfilled. As he pondered on it, is it not sure that he began to see that righteousness, obedience to the call of God within, rather than rebellion, is the way to the coming of the glorious future?

2. *Tidings of the Baptist.* It is to a mind full of these things that rumour brings with increasing detail the word of the appearance of a mighty prophet some three days' journey down the Jordan valley to the south. Some say it is Elijah came again. In any case the

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whole land is gathering to hear him. How the nationalists in Nazareth must have discussed it! Is he the Messiah or only a prophet heralding deliverance?

3. *The journey.* Perhaps a dozen of the villagers determined to go and hear for themselves. A staff and some simple food was all that these mountaineers needed for the journey. As they travelled over the hills, resting at noon, when the heat was greatest, or gathered about the fire at night, to what a pitch of interest and hope their spirits must have risen!

4. *Try to feel what it meant to Jesus* to stand at last within sight and hearing of John, the fiery, fearless spirit who was to awaken him to a new life. How the heart of Jesus must have thrilled as he saw the crowd's eager response to John's splendid summons to righteousness! Hesitating at first, Jesus before very long makes up his mind that the right thing for him to do is to come right out, and take his stand with John for the things of the nobler life. Nazareth and the quiet pondering of the Nazareth life are behind him forever as he goes down into the water. There is a light from heaven in his heart, and at last it seems to him as though the glorious hope of the prophets of the past is springing to new life.

5. *Jesus as John's follower.* Probably Jesus spent some time with John. Try to think out something of the influence of these two young men on one another,—Jesus, the quiet, reflective, tender temperament, from the little northern village, and John full of passion and fire and terrible stern hatred of the evil about him. Perhaps John urges Jesus to help carry on his work. At any rate, Jesus knows that the first great crisis of his life is before him, and goes off alone over the hills to the silent wilderness to fight out the question.

II.—The Inner Baptism.

When Jesus made his decision to cast in his lot with John and to be baptised, there came to him, as there comes to each one of us when we set ourselves deliberately for what we know to be best, that sense of profound satisfaction which we may see in the early stories of the light and the voice from heaven. So not we, too, know something of it, even in least things? Remember that the whole future of Jesus hinged on the determination to stand clearly here and now for what appealed to the noblest in him. What if he had just let the prompting slip past, as we too often do?

W. H. Pulsford.

Seed Corn.

Words are among the most solid and enduring things which the wit of man has invented.

That things are not so ill with us as they might be is half owing to the number who lived faithfully an obscure and hidden life and rest in unvisited tombs.

There is far more religion now than there was in the so-called ages of faith.

To give whatever we have to give to children is to give royally.

Yes or no never answered any question that ever troubled a human soul.

Things have their tears!

Whoever is of desponding temper may be asked whether he has well enough considered the plan on which God rules our life. It is not one that secures us exemption from trial, but strength and support in trial.

God sometimes lets the inferior motive, such as fear or expediency, or hope of happiness, have the chief urgency, if thereby He can draw us near, and inspire us with the wish to come yet nearer.

To believe is to by-live, or live by. Our belief is the truth we live by.

A basely selfish man is chargeable with the neglect of himself. He has a diseased self, and infects the neighbourhood. His fault is that he has not cared aright for self.

The Gorgon that petrifies us when once we see its face is our own selfishness.

In leading a decent exterior life without devout motives we dress a doll.

The life of faith begins for nearly every man in a deed of love.

That a divine temperance is better than a fanatical abstinence has still to be often re-asserted.

Restraint is but a part of management; many men, preachers and others, never hit the mark because they never let themselves go.

Life is movement; but motion upward or downward is the alternative.

In the outward world there is an inward soul.

By thought alone can no man find God; a man must "live" to find the living God, and we do not live unless we love and do its deeds.

The Bible says:—"The just shall live by faith." "Ah," says the world, "A poor livelihood!"

Faith is based on knowledge, and knowledge always implies an act of faith at its beginning.

An act of faith is an act of will.

There are various kinds of compulsion; there is the compulsion from the bayonet and the compulsion of reason; the compulsion from frowns, and winning, compelling grace from a smile.

Affections are interpreters.

Words, said Luther, are living things with hands and feet.

Do not live beyond your emotional income. A little reserve and economy in the expression of feeling will keep feeling from exhaustion.

He is a great man who can laugh at others without losing his own soul.

Children's Page.

How Johnny was Cured.

JOHNNY was a great brag. A brag is a boaster. If he heard a playmate tell of something he had done, no matter what it was, Johnny would give a snort, and exclaim:—

"Pooh! That's nothing! Who couldn't do that?"

One evening the family sat around the fire in the sitting-room. Papa was reading, grandma and mamma were sewing, Alice and Joe were studying their lessons, when Johnny came strutting in. He took a chair by the table and began reading "Robinson Crusoe."

Presently Joe, who was younger than Johnny, went up to his brother, saying: "Look at my drawing. I did it to-day in school. Isn't it good?"

"Pooh! Call that good! You ought to see the one I drew! It beats yours all hollow!"

Joe was rather crestfallen, and little Alice, who had a sympathetic heart, pitied her brother, and going to Joe, asked him to let her see his drawing.

"I wish I could do as well as you do, Joe," she said, hoping to revive her brother's drooping spirits.

"Pooh!" sneered Johnny, "you needn't try to draw; for girls can't make even a straight line."

It was not long before Mr. Boaster left the room for a few moments. When he came back, everything seemed to be going on as when he left. Papa was reading, grandma and mamma were sewing, and Joe and Alice were busy with their lessons.

"At last I have finished my hem," remarked grandma, folding the napkin she had been hemming so industriously.

"Pooh!" said mamma, contemptuously, "that is nothing. I have done two while you are doing one!"

The children looked up quickly; for who would have believed she would have spoken so? It was not like her to do so.

Grandma picked up another napkin and began hemming it, but said nothing.

"Papa, look at my examples, please. I have done every one of them, and haven't made a single mistake," said Alice, crossing the room to where her father was sitting before the open grate fire.

"Pooh! That's nothing," replied her father, not even taking her paper to look at it. "You ought to see the way I used to do examples when I was your age!"

Poor little Alice was greatly astonished to hear such a discouraging and boastful remark from her generally kind father, and she was about to turn away when he drew her near to

him and whispered something in her ear which brought the smiles to her face.

For a few minutes no one said anything, and work went on as before. Johnny was deeply engrossed in the history of Crusoe's adventures, and the other children continued their studies.

"My flowers look so well! I believe the geraniums are going to bloom again," remarked mamma.

"Pooh! They are not half so thrifty as those I used to raise. Why, I had flowers all winter long, and you have only had a few blossoms in the whole winter," said grandma, contemptuously.

"What was the matter with everybody?" thought Johnny. He had never known them to be in such a humour as they were that evening.

When papa remarked presently that he had stepped into the grocer's and been weighed that afternoon, and that he "tipped the beam" at 168 pounds, and that was doing "pretty well" for him, mamma said, crossly:

"Pooh! You call that doing pretty well? Old Mr. Benson weighs 225 pounds, and no one ever heard him bragging of it."

Everybody laughed. Papa shouted. It was such a surprise, and grandma got up and left the room to keep from choking with laughter.

Johnny saw them all look at him, and after a minute or two began to "smell a mouse," as the saying goes.

"Papa," said he, "what are you all laughing about? Is it at me?"

"Well, we are not exactly laughing at you. We thought we would try your way of boasting of our accomplishments, and see how you thought it sounded; but mamma spoiled our game before we had finished it."

Johnny looked rather sheepish the rest of the evening. He wondered if he was as disagreeable as the older folk that evening when he boasted of what he could do or had done. He was forced to admit that boasting sounded very unpleasant, and he resolved to break himself of the habit.

But know,
Without a star or angel for their guide,
Who worship God shall find him. Humble love,
And not proud reason, keeps the door of heaven;
Love finds admission where proud reason fails.

—*Young.*

The eye to perceive wrong things is by no means the same as the eye to perceive right things.

News from the Field.

As we enter upon the New Year, start afresh with our work, and kindle anew the fire of our hopes, we can just glance, over our shoulders, at the last month of 1906, and learn whether it has anything to say to us.

We noticed, last month, the graceful recognition of the 90th anniversary of the birth of the *Rev. J. K. Montgomery*, of *Chester*, and now we tell of the celebration of the 80th anniversary of the birth of *Rev. S. A. Steinthal*, of *Manchester*, another of our wonderful old men. These men have done good work for their fellow men, and lived good lives, and they still live among us, teaching us how lovely are the lives of God's saints.

Another veteran, now past 80 years old, the *Rev. T. W. Chignell*, of *Exeter*, still at his post, where, for nearly half a century, he has been prophet and poet, asks to be partly relieved from the duty of preaching every Sunday, and his congregation have naturally acceded to his request, and they will give him the help he needs. Long may he still inspire by his winged words of thought and life!

At *Bristol*, the Lewin's Mead people have been honouring themselves by presentations to *Rev. A. N. Blatchford, B.A., and his wife*, who, after 40 years of strenuous service, still remain as potent forces for progress and catholicity in the ancient city. All good wishes for these true workers!

Welcomes have been in the air throughout the country. The *Rev. Jenkyn Thomas* at *Glossop; Mr. Jesse Hipperson*—formerly a Wesleyan—at *Bermondsey;* the *Rev. S. S. Brettell, M.A.*, at *Darlington;* the *Rev. J. A. Shaw, M.A.*, at *Wolverhampton;* and the *Rev H. McLachlan, M.A., B.D.*, have all been greeted by the congregations to which they have gone, and with high hopes, have entered upon their new work. To each and all we give the heartiest welcome.

The *Rev. Simon Jones, B.A.*, resigning his charge at *Pontypridd*, has accepted a call to *Swansea*, where he has to follow our friend, *Dr. Tudor Jones*, who has gone to a larger work across the seas; and the *Rev. W. J. Pond*, of *Long Sutton*, lays down his work, which he has carried on successfully for over 16 years, to enter upon the ministry at *Whitchurch*, to which he has been called by the *Midland Christian Union*. Hard work lies before both these men, but they are not likely to be unequal to or to shirk from the task they have undertaken.

The story of the *Van* Mission which has just been told is full of surprises and inspiration. Welcomed wherever it went, the Van not only attracted the people who listened gladly to the message it had to deliver; but it enlisted the sympathy and co-operation of a large number of the ministers of the *Missionary Conference*, and was always well and efficiently manned wherever

it went. Success was so great, and the fields it opened out were so wide and promising, that already *three* new vans have been promised, and it seems as if, very soon, the whole country will be visited by these travelling agencies of our uplifting faith.

At *Mountpottinger, Belfast, Sir E. D. Lawrence* and his *Lady* have built a new Sunday School in memory of their niece, the wife of a recent minister there. While in *Belfast* she exercised a sweet and helpful influence, and the New Building will serve to keep her memory green.

We notice that at *Gateshead, Chorlton, Kilburn,* and *Shrewsbury* our friends have been busy with Bazaars or Sales of Work, and, in each case, success has crowned the efforts of the energetic workers.

Yorkshire has followed the good example set in *London* and *Liverpool,* and has established a *Laymen's Unitarian Club.* Apparently it is going to be a success. Very soon *Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol,* and other places may be stimulated to follow the good example.

One of the most useful and beneficent of our Institutions, the *Ministers' Benevolent Society,* has been holding its Annual Meeting. The story of each year is most interesting, and shews how efficiently the Society has helped in times of temporary illness on the part of some workers, and how in old age, and in times of bereavement, how widows and orphans have been helped by its funds. The Directors are to be congratulated on the wise and tender way in which they carry out their great trust, and bear their responsibilities.

The congregation at *High Pavement, Nottingham,* have, very properly, put up a Memorial Tablet to the memory of the *Rev. R. Armstrong, B.A.,* who, for many years, was minister of the congregation, and exercised great influence in the old, and most progressive town.

It has pleased *His Majesty the King* to confer distinctions upon two of our stalwarts, *J. Baxter Ellis,* of *Newcastle-on-Tyne,* and *W. H. Talbot,* Town Clerk of *Manchester.* Both these gentlemen are now called to the rank of Knights, and both are well worthy of the honours they have obtained.

Before closing this glimpse into the past we must lay our tribute of respect and honour on the graves of good souls who are gone from among us, but who, while here, lived noble lives, and set a good example to their fellow creatures. *Mrs. F. Nettlefold,* of London, the constant and untiring helper of her noble husband, and the friend of all good movements; *Mr. S. D. Hall,* nephew of that excellent man, *Dr. Spencer T. Hall,* and earnest worker in our old Church at *Derby; Wybert Reeve*—actor, author, and teacher, who, across the seas, and in his native country, lived a manly and earnest life; and *Captain W. Lowrie,* one of the purest and most devoted of our sailors, and one of the truest of men, have all passed from our midst, and have left great gaps in the circles of which they were centres. But they cannot be forgotten, and their influence will long be felt among us. Brave souls, as we bid you farewell, we seem to catch the echo of the great words, "Ye were faithful unto death—enter now into the joy of your Lord."

SCRUTATOR.

December 17th, 1906.

THE joy of those who cannot keep their joy to themselves, who must call upon others to partake of it,—is not all joy of this quality? Are not these its characteristics? Try to conceive the most selfish emotion, still it only becomes joy by bursting the bonds of self.—*Wisdom and Destiny.*

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The *Seed Sower* is admirably adapted for localising, and facilities are provided for that purpose. The circulation is already larger than that of any other magazine or journal published to meet the wants of our Free Churches. It gives a larger amount of matter, and every increase of circulation will be used to secure increased efficiency.

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MR. ARNOLD WOOD, WHITEHALL CHAMBERS, COLMORE ROW, BIRMINGHAM.
Letters for the Editor to be sent to 120, Gough Road, Birmingham.

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